

Toward an Operational Reserve: Transforming the Army's Individual Ready Reserve

by

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Abstract

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This essay identifies opportunities to increase the value, effectiveness and efficiency of the Army's strategic human resource asset assigned to the the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) for future operational assignment in support of the Reserve and Active Components. It begins with a review of the value and strategic importance of the IRR for the total Army. This is followed by an assessment of the IRR through a study commissioned by the Army G-1 in 2005 that recommended several initiatives. The essay includes an analysis of the Army's IRR and its readiness based on musters performed by the Human Resources Command (HRC) over the last five years. It identifies pronounced gaps in the Army's ability to monitor, control and train the IRR due to ongoing and expected future resource constraints, and management practices. The essay then proposes several initiatives to enhance the readiness of the Army's IRR to ensure its capability to fill human resources requirements when called upon to support the operational reserve and the active component.

Toward an Operational Reserve: Transforming the Army's Individual Ready Reserve

An army that maintains its cohesion;...that cannot be shaken by fears...; [that] will not lose the strength to obey orders and its respect and trust for its officers...; that is mindful of the honor of its arms -- such an army is imbued with the true military spirit.

—Carl von Clausewitz¹

Introduction

This essay identifies opportunities to increase the value, effectiveness and efficiency of the strategic human resource asset within the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) for future operational assignment in support of the Reserve and Active Components. It begins with a review of the value and strategic importance of the IRR to the total Army. This is followed by an assessment of the IRR through a study commissioned by the Army G-1 in 2005 that recommended several initiatives. The essay includes an analysis of the Army's IRR and its readiness based on musters performed by the Human Resources Command (HRC) over the last five years. It identifies pronounced gaps in the Army's ability to monitor and control the IRR due to ongoing and expected future resource constraints, and management practices. The essay then proposes several initiatives to enhance the readiness of the Army's IRR to ensure its capability to fill human resources requirements when called upon to support the operational reserve and the active component.

Clausewitz observed in the early 1800s that an army must be cohesive to be successful. The U.S. Army's current leaders, both the Chief of Staff and the Secretary of the Army, emphasize this same message. General Raymond Odierno, the 38th Army Chief of Staff, has established the "Soldier for Life" program. This program states that a "Soldier for Life enables Army, governmental, and community efforts to facilitate

successful integration of our Soldiers, Veterans, and their Families in order to keep them Army Strong and instill their values, ethos, and leadership within communities.”²

General Odierno continues to reflect on Clausewitz’s observation by stating “The Strength of our Nation is our Army, the Strength of our Army is our Soldiers, the Strength of our Soldiers is their Families, and this is what makes us Army Strong.”³ The Honorable John McHugh, the 21st Secretary of the Army, published his Total Force Policy in September 2012. This policy reinforces his guidance that all Soldiers of the Army, whether they are active or reserve component, operational or strategic, are integral to the Army’s future success. The policy directs the Army to streamline its voluntary and involuntary call to active duty for reserve component Soldiers and ensure the Total Force is organized, trained and sustained to achieve anticipated objectives.⁴

The current total force of United States Army is made up of its active component (AC) consisting of over 540,000 Soldiers and its Ready Reserve of over 700,000 Soldiers.⁵ The Ready Reserve is the primary manpower pool of the reserve components and consists of those Soldiers assigned to the Selected Reserve (SELRES), the IRR and the Inactive National Guard (ING).⁶ Integration of active and reserve component forces is critical and even more important as the Army draws down and relies more on its reserve components for its operational capabilities.

Problem

The cohesiveness of our Army relies on its ability to draw upon all its human resource capabilities when necessary. With a drawdown of the active force to exceed 70,000 over the next five years, it is critical that the Ready Reserve and more importantly the IRR is capable of receiving, monitoring, accounting, maintaining, and responding with necessary human resource capital when called upon. The Army’s

active component is expected to shrink to between 450,000 and 490,000 over the next four years due to budget pressures. The Army's Selected Reserve is expected to have another 500,000 to 550,000 in support the Army's active component as an operational force when you combine the Reserve and National Guard. This positions our nation's Army at just one million Soldiers to engage any global threat on a moment's notice. If a threat presents itself that requires a larger force, the IRR is the only strategic capability the Army has to quickly increase its manpower. This force, if managed properly, could strengthen the capability of the operational force by 10% until the Army is able to produce trained and capable forces through its traditional initial training programs.

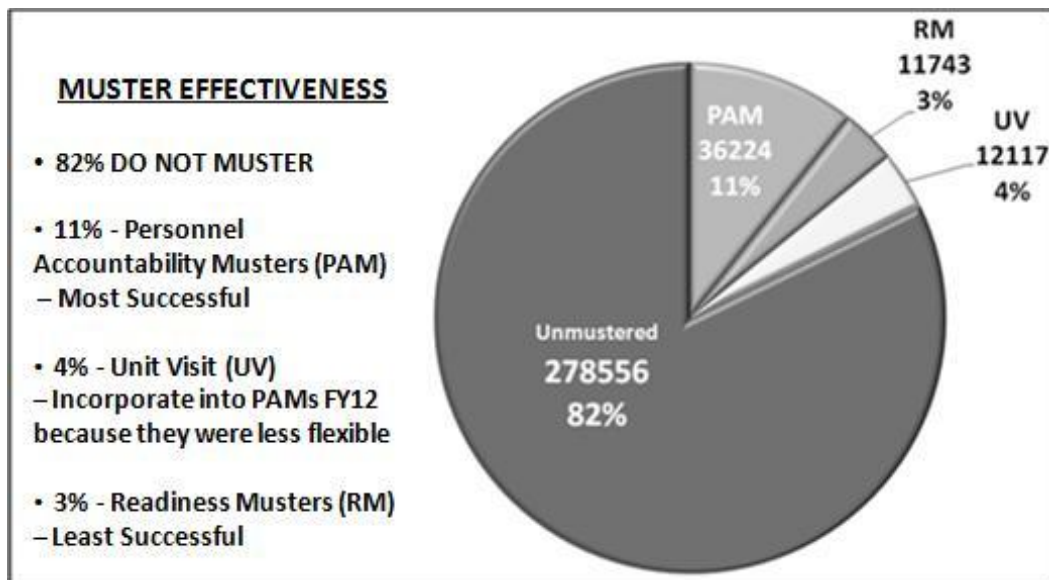


Figure 1. IRR Muster Participation Fiscal Year 2008 to Fiscal Year 2012⁷

Our capabilities to monitor and manage the Army's IRR are severely lacking. Over the five years, 2008 through 2012, HRC has been able to account for only 18% of the IRR population through its muster program.⁸ Lieutenant General Jack Stultz, Chief of the Army Reserve from May 2006 to June 2012, said in January 2012 that the Army

must prevent the complete loss of Soldiers with years of training, experience and skill.

"If we're going to come down from 570,000 to 490,000 on the active side, think of the investment that is going to walk out the door if we don't have the right transition program in place..."⁹ The IRR offers an option to a significant number of trained and capable Soldiers to continue to be a member of the force and support the "Soldier for Life" mind set. The IRR currently accounts for well over 11% of the total strength of the Army and is expected to grow to 13% of the force by 2017.¹⁰ Additionally, the IRR holds all the commissioned officers in the ready reserve not serving in the SELRES.

The IRR is described as:

... a manpower pool of individuals who have already received military training, either in the Active Component or in the Selected Reserve.¹¹ Members of the IRR may be required to perform regular training,¹² although DOD has not implemented such a requirement since the 1950s. Members of the IRR can volunteer for training or active duty assignments, and they can also be involuntarily ordered to active duty under a Partial Mobilization or a Full Mobilization.¹³

The relevance of the IRR has been studied at length and the IRR continues to remain a viable and strategic source of critical manpower. In her study of the IRR and its relevance in this era of strategic change, Colonel Corrina Boggess posits that the IRR has been a critical source of manpower as far back as the Korean War and for all recent actions including *Operations Desert Storm, Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom*.¹⁴ In light of the Army's drawdown and its critical role in our national security, the IRR will continue to be a strategic source of trained and capable Soldiers. It will become even more relevant as active and reserve component units are subject to lower assigned strength. IRR Soldiers, when called upon, can fill critical requirements within units in order to enable these units to fulfill their operational mission. The flexibility to call upon a trained and capable force is invaluable and cannot be

overlooked. The IRR provides Soldiers who are trained and capable in less time than it would take Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) to grow its capability to provide trained Soldiers to meet an expanded operational mission. Given the value of these Soldiers and their capability, the problem is in how to best monitor and manage this critical strategic human resource asset so it can be best employed when required.

Background

This problem has been clearly realized for decades. As far back as the Korean War, the Army has struggled with how to best monitor and manage the Soldiers assigned to the IRR. Outdated personnel records were the source of many problems in the 1950s.¹⁵ Albeit improved in some ways, personnel records are still the source of many issues today to include accountability. The lack of accountability was formally recognized in 2005, when the Army G-1 commissioned an internal study of the IRR titled the “Individual Ready Reserve Transformation Plan.” This Department of the Army review acknowledged that there was potential for the IRR to become a much greater asset for the Army but a significant problem lay in that IRR members were either unaware of their mandatory service obligation or were unqualified to perform further service to the Army. A major conclusion of the review focused on the need to effectively manage the IRR or eliminate it entirely. “Eliminating the IRR, however, is currently not a realistic option, given the ongoing (contingency operation) demand for troops, manpower pressures, and the long-term costs to obtain and train new troops.”¹⁶

The critical problem identified by the Army G-1 2005 study was that the Army lacked accurate personnel data on approximately a third of the total IRR population. Furthermore, roughly half of the data received on new IRR Soldiers contains errors and 60% of IRR Soldiers had no medical data to support their deployable status.¹⁷ The next

issue identified by the study showed a lack of training readiness for IRR Soldiers. Since Soldier skills diminish quickly upon entrance to the IRR, and because there is limited time and resources available to reinforce these skills, IRR training strategies must focus on skill assessment and refresher training.¹⁸ The study produced a focused set of initiatives that address core challenges of managing the IRR. These included:

- Enhance information management and system processing
- Maximize fulfillment of military service obligations
- Expand training opportunities; ensure fulfillment of planned and programmed training
- Improve transition processing to the Ready Reserve
- Reinforce and emphasize current policies and regulations
- Target strategic communications and outreach programs¹⁹

The Army G-1's study concluded that implementation of a program was key to improving control and management of the IRR. The study's recommendations included:

- Use of existing and emerging technologies to interface with IRR Soldiers
- Rebrand the IRR Soldier as an Individual Warrior (IW) through more effective communication
- Implement an outreach program that strengthens the Army's relationship with the IW
- Develop incentives and sanctions to motivate Soldiers to fulfill their service obligations
- Implement phased training program to improve the readiness of each IW
- Create flexible opportunities to service and interface with Career Counselors²⁰

When Secretary of the Army Francis Harvey was apprised of the Army G-1's study and these issues, he approved of a number of proposed recommendations and initiatives. These initiatives included consolidating two of the numerous administrative categories, managing Soldier's expectations at initial entry to and at transition from active duty, conducting systemic reviews to identify non-mobilization assets for separation, and implementation of an annual screening and training program that aligns Soldiers with the Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN) model.²¹ In his guidance, the Secretary of the Army established a goal to conduct a Soldier Readiness Progressing (SRP) program for up to one third of the IRR Soldiers annually so that over three years every Soldier is screened. This screening would enhance the readiness of the force by identifying those Soldiers requiring military occupational specialty (MOS) refresher training, reclassification, and conduct collective training if necessary.²²

Of the initiatives established by the Army G-1's 2005 study and approved by the Secretary of the Army, critical elements have either not been fully implemented or implemented at all. Failing to take the steps identified in the study and appropriately implement simply leads to a continued lack of management of the IRR. It is apparent that some steps have been taken, but a need to evaluate their effectiveness is critical. It is clear the Army still does not understand the value of this strategic human resource asset having failed after five years to implement these initiatives. A lack of active management of the IRR in turn marginalizes and reduces the readiness of those Soldiers assigned to the IRR. If Soldiers are a core resource of our Army and we look to cultivate a mindset of "Soldier for Life," it is necessary to take steps to better manage this strategic human resource asset and make them feel like Soldiers and members of

the team who are valued and cared for. Figure 2 shows the recommended objectives identified in the Army G-1's 2005 study.

Initiatives	Objectives
1. Control and Monitor the IRR Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify and Separate Soldiers who no longer have further potential for useful military service if mobilized ▪ Maintain accurate database systems that are regularly updated and monitored ▪ Ensure compliance with regulations and policies ▪ Eliminate automatic transfers of unqualified personnel
2. Maximize the Military Service Obligation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase opportunities that maximize utilization of each Soldier ▪ Ensure that contracts specify each component of the service member's obligation and how the obligation will be fulfilled (AC, SELRES, IRR) ▪ Use contract options, incentives/bonuses and follow-on counseling to increase unit participation
3. Develop Screening & Training Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Design and implement a phased approach to engage all IRR personnel through annual screening and skills training to bolster the overall viability of the IRR
4. Expand Transition Campaign Efforts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recruit from the IRR to fill SELRES vacancies ▪ Enhance Capabilities of Career Counselors at Transition Centers to maximize AC-SELRES transitions ▪ Assist in monitoring unqualified personnel transfers to the IRR
5. Marketing & Outreach Campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a marketing campaign to recruit, educate and highlight service obligations and opportunities ▪ Develop IRR Outreach Program to keep Soldiers engaged

Figure 2. IRR Transformation Initiatives²³

To best understand the basis for the Army's responsibilities to monitor and manage the IRR, it is necessary to review what the United States Code has established as a legal requirement for the services in reference to the Ready Reserve as a whole.

The United States Code, Title 10, Section 10149 states:

...the Secretary concerned shall provide a system of continuous screening of units and members of the Ready Reserve to ensure the following:

(1) That there will be no significant attrition of those members or units during a mobilization.

(2) That there is a proper balance of military skills.

(3) That except for those with military skills for which there is an overriding requirement, members having critical civilian skills are not retained in numbers beyond the need for those skills.

(4) That with due regard to national security and military requirements, recognition will be given to participation in combat.

(5) That members whose mobilization in an emergency would result in an extreme personal or community hardship are not retained in the Ready Reserve.²⁴

Based on the U.S. Code above, the Department of Defense (DOD) developed several directives and instructions giving guidance to the services through policy in order to meet these legal requirements. These policies include the following administrative requirements:

As members of the Ready Reserve, all members of the IRR...shall be continuously screened to meet the requirements of Section 10149 of Title 10, United States Code, and to ensure that the Ready Reserve force is composed of members who:

- Meet the standards of mental, moral, professional, and physical fitness established by their Military Service.

- Possess the military qualifications required in the various ranks, grades, ratings, and specialties.

- Are immediately available for mobilization as specified in Sections 12301(a) and 12302 of Title 10, United States Code, or as may be required by other provisions of law.²⁵

Additionally, the DOD has published training policy for the IRR which establishes requirements for:

All members of the IRR may be required to serve on Active Duty for Training (ADT) up to thirty days a year in accordance with (IAW) Section 10147 of Title 10, United States Code. ADT is authorized for IRR members to allow full-time attendance at organized and planned specialized skill, professional development, refresher, and proficiency training. Authorization for ADT shall be managed IAW regulations established by the Secretary concerned, which shall provide that IRR

training funds may only be used to enhance or refresh existing skills that plans indicate shall be required for support of military operations or mobilization. Emphasis shall be placed on training those most likely to be needed during the first 30 days after mobilization.²⁶

Furthermore, the DOD has established physical examination and medical readiness policy in order to meet the legal requirements of Section 10206, Title 10, United States Code, by stipulating that:

Each member of the IRR...shall be examined to determine the member's physical fitness for:

- Military duty or promotion.
- Attendance at a school of the Armed Forces.
- Other action related to career progression.
- Each member shall annually execute and submit a certificate of physical condition, as required by Section 10206 of Title 10, United States Code, or complete a health assessment according to guidance prescribed by the Secretary concerned.²⁷

With these clearly defined administrative, training and medical policies in place, the Army has not fully managed to both monitor and control its strategic human resource so that it is prepared to meet the nation's call.

Transforming the Management of Individual Ready Reserve Soldiers

Given the statutes with DOD directives and instructions, the Army has not clearly defined, through regulated policy and procedure, the metrics and methods for determining the readiness of the IRR. Management methods must be more than the Secretary of the Army's guidance to physically screen one third of the IRR population annually through a muster program.²⁸ *Army Regulation 135-133* clearly stipulates a requirement for the annual screening of the Ready Reserve, but the focus of this outdated regulation, that is almost twenty-three years old, clearly does not take into

account the differences a Soldier assigned to the IRR is managed. Local units capably manage the administrative, training and medical readiness of Soldiers assigned to the SELRES. Soldiers assigned to the IRR are not managed by a local unit and are centrally controlled by HRC at Fort Knox, Kentucky.

The Army has not established categories of members of the IRR who will be most likely to be needed at various levels of contingency operations even though directed to do so by the Department of Defense.²⁹ This detailed stratification would enable the HRC a means to better manage, prioritize training and resources, and determine screening requirements.³⁰ The only stratification that has been established for Soldiers assigned to the IRR is based on recent training experience. These categories are called Recently Trained or RT and are classified by the length in months since a Soldier last received any skill training. A Soldier assigned to RT12 would have received training within the last twelve months; RT24 within the last 24 months and so on. This method of categorizing the Soldiers of the IRR only classifies the degree of skill degradation that may occur and does not classify which skills are most important and valuable to fill Army requirements, and potentially perishable. The priority for specific skills within the Army's strategic human resource asset must be regularly identified and published for HRC. By establishing these priorities, limited resources can best be utilized to monitor and manage the Soldiers assigned to the IRR during this era of transformation and constrained resources.

The Army must refine and update its management methods in light of the strategic importance of the IRR. The Army can manage the IRR through a centralized, decentralized, or hybrid process. HRC has responsibility through the Army G-1 as its

field operating agency, to provide personnel and training management and currently manages the IRR from its headquarters at Fort Knox, Kentucky. Career managers within each branch management office at HRC are now responsible for the management of active component Soldiers, Army Reserve Active Guard Reserve (AGR) Soldiers, Individual Mobilization Augmentation (IMA) Soldiers, and Soldiers assigned to the IRR. Given the demands placed on the career managers within each branch office, IRR Soldiers are typically left to perform their own administrative and training management by mail with no clear understanding of what must be performed, how it is to be performed or why. With no metrics established, other than the Secretary of the Army's required physical muster once every three years, career managers as well as IRR Soldiers have no motivation to remain in proactive contact to ensure annual statutory requirements are completed. These metrics and measurable must include those identified in the Army G-1's 2005 study. The first of these initiatives include control and monitoring of the IRR population.

Initiatives	Objectives
1. Control and Monitor the IRR Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify and Separate Soldiers who no longer have further potential for useful military service if mobilized ▪ Maintain accurate database systems that are regularly updated and monitored ▪ Ensure compliance with regulations and policies ▪ Eliminate automatic transfers of unqualified personnel

Figure 3. IRR Transformation First Initiative³¹

Control and monitoring of the IRR population includes systems and an accurate database by which to maintain this information. Identification and separation of Soldiers who no longer have further potential and have met their service obligation must be

discharged regularly. The Officer Personnel Management Directorate (OPMD) at HRC has developed detailed standard operating procedures for officers who have met their Mandatory Service Obligation (MSO).³² There is no evidence that similar standard procedures to communicate with enlisted Soldiers have been developed within the Enlisted Personnel Management Directorate (EPMD) at HRC. The OPMD procedures are most valuable to the implementation of this initiative.

The IRR is split into two main categories of Soldiers. The first category or current organization (CURORG) labeled “K” holds those Soldiers who have not completed their MSO. Soldiers are assigned to CURORG L when they have completed their MSO or voluntarily remained in the IRR beyond their MSO. Movement between these categories is necessary for the basic stratification strategy called for. Priority of resources must be given to those Soldiers in CURORG K that have a contractual MSO and typically fresher Soldier skill sets. Additionally, procedures for those assigned to CURORG L should include automatic discharge when a Soldier in this category fails to respond to communication required annually. Automatic discharge will motivate a Soldier in the IRR to serve when called upon. Only those Soldiers who maintain contact with the command at Fort Knox should be retained and not discharged when they have completed their MSO.

The organizational structure to manage the IRR at HRC should be consolidated into two separate offices with one assigned to OPMD and one assigned to EPMD. The distribution of IRR Soldiers based on MOS or branch assignment is not productive and lends to a tiered approach by a career manager. Soldiers in an active status are assigned to local units and have regular access to administrative, medical and training

support. IRR Soldiers are not assigned to a local unit and do not have this support. Career managers will first engage with and typically give priority to those Soldiers who are in an active status, leaving IRR Soldiers relegated to a bottom tier. The monitor and control IRR Soldiers are different than those in an active status. HRC is responsible for providing this centralized direct support for IRR Soldiers. IRR Soldiers are given a greater institutional focus by HRC consolidating the monitoring and control of IRR Officers under a central branch in OPMD and likewise for IRR Enlisted Soldiers in EPMD. Further consolidation into a single office under HRC headquarters is not recommended due to the different management practices of the officer and enlisted Soldiers based on statutory requirements.

The second initiative of the Army G-1's 2005 study was implemented in December 2005 but was discontinued at the end of fiscal year 2011.³³ Figure 4 summarizes this initiative and its supporting objectives.

Initiatives	Objectives
2. Maximize the Military Service Obligation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase opportunities that maximize utilization of each Soldier ▪ Ensure that contracts specify each component of the service member's obligation and how the obligation will be fulfilled (AC, SELRES, IRR) ▪ Use contract options, incentives/bonuses and follow-on counseling to increase unit participation

Figure 4. IRR Transformation Second Initiative³⁴

This initiative offered Soldiers the option of reducing their MSO by two years to six years total if they would serve their entire obligation in the active component and the SELRES of the reserve component. This initiative's aim was to increase the opportunity that maximized the utilization of Soldiers in an active status in either component during a

period when our nation was involved in two major conflicts. This option was used by almost 4,800 Soldiers over the six year period.³⁵ Given the number of accessions in the hundreds of thousands during this same period, this initiative did not have the expected affect and should not be further implemented. If this initiative had greater success in attracting Soldiers to active status in the operational force of either component, then the number of Soldiers ultimately assigned to the Army's strategic human resource asset would have been severely reduced. The diminished numbers assigned to the IRR would limit the nation's flexibility to rapidly expand its force in a very short period of time. This initiative is not suitable for the long-term requirements of our nation to maintain a strategic human resource asset capable of service on a moment's notice.

Critical to maintaining the capability of the nation's strategic human resource is an effective screening and training program. The Secretary of the Army's guidance of

Initiatives	Objectives
3. Develop Screening & Training Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Design and implement a phased approach to engage all IRR personnel through annual screening and skills training to bolster the overall viability of the IRR

Figure 5. IRR Transformation Third Initiative³⁶

22 February 2006 directed specific actions to ensure the IRR is regularly screened. The directive was in response to the Army G-1's 2005 study that found the Army lacked a sufficient screening and training program. He established an IRR muster requirement to expand HRC's screening program to a Soldier Readiness Program type review by 2011. Every Soldier assigned to the IRR will process through this SRP review every three years.³⁷ An SRP is an intense review of a Soldiers administrative and medical

readiness which includes three pages of checklists using the Department of the Army Form 7425. The intent of this review is to ensure Soldiers are prepared and meet conditions for deployment. The SRP requires commanders to maximize soldier readiness by identifying and correcting non-deployment conditions.³⁸ This review requires major installation administrative and medical assets that are not easily transported and reviews perishable conditions that may or may not be present when a Soldier assigned to the IRR will actually be called to active service. The Secretary's guidance of February 2006 is feasibly difficult due to the limited resources provided to meet this requirement. This type of intense review should be reserved for Soldiers assigned to or joining the operational force.

With increased constraints on resources, HRC cannot meet the physical muster requirement. The IRR is projected to grow to well over 90,000 by 2017. This population would require that no less than 30,000 Soldiers are reviewed annually through the SRP process. The cost of this muster program is an average of \$15.8 million annually.³⁹ The current fiscal year 2015 programmed funding is equal to just over half that amount. When further constraints are applied limiting it to 70% of the funded amount, the program is reduced to just \$6 million, almost \$10 million less than is necessary to meet the Secretary's guidance.⁴⁰ It is clearly not feasible for HRC to meet the current guidance. The funding available would not even cover the cost of screening let alone the cost of training that should be available to Soldiers who have not completed their MSO.

Regular skills training is necessary for IRR Soldiers to maintain readiness. In a 2004 RAND Arroyo Center report, it was determined that the traditional model of

mobilizing, training and deploying our Ready Reserve is not sufficient and a model of training, mobilizing, refresher training, and deploying is better suited for the possible future contingencies our Reserve forces will be called for.⁴¹ But given the dispersion of the Soldiers assigned to the IRR, how do you provide training without an investment of major resources? The answer is through distributed distance learning. Soldiers assigned to the IRR should be able to access important training modules online through the existing distance learning systems provided by TRADOC. By completing basic distance learning training modules, IRR Soldiers can remain aware of current information and necessary knowledge.

IRR Soldiers need the same access as active status Soldiers to administrative, medical and training systems such as TRADOC's Army Learning Management System and HRC's Records Portal. Through this access, IRR Soldiers are able to update basic administrative and medical information for data accuracy as well as complete distance learning activities to maintain necessary skills. IRR Soldiers do not have complete access to these systems because they do not maintain a Common Access Card (CAC) required for access. The current Army and Department of Defense policy that limits the use of the CAC to those Soldiers in an active status presents a barrier to IRR Soldiers fully accessing these important online systems.⁴² As the Army systems have required greater security by use of a CAC, so too are IRR Soldiers prevented from accessing these systems.

In order for Soldiers to access personnel, medical, and training systems online, IRR Soldiers must be afforded the use of a CAC. The cost of this capability would not be dramatic since all Soldiers leaving the active component and the SELRES have an

active CAC. The cost per Soldier is currently \$9.00 if a CAC must be issued or re-credentialed. The majority of Soldiers assigned to the IRR have a CAC when leaving active status, so this cost would be neutral.⁴³

By providing CACs to IRR Soldiers, the Army is further supporting the “Soldier for Life” initiative and allowing IRR Soldiers a distributed method to updating important administrative and medical information as well as access important training as necessary. In an era of constrained resources that has dramatically reduced the funding programmed in support of the IRR, this is the most feasible method to ensuring the Army’s strategic human resource asset is provided the best method to updating administrative and medical information as well as access important knowledge through distance learning modules online. Giving IRR Soldiers access to appropriate information systems will reduce the demand for direct interaction with their assigned command at Fort Knox, Kentucky, and in turn reduce the staffing requirements to manage such a large population.

With the assignment of a CAC to every IRR Soldier, the Secretary of the Army’s requirement to physically muster one third of the IRR population annually should be repealed. HRC should develop a virtual online muster that mirrors the results gained by a physical muster. This muster must include a periodic medical review by a certified medical professional to document any changes in the Soldiers physical condition. With a CAC the IRR Soldier can then upload appropriate documents as necessary, update personnel information as appropriate, and complete any necessary training modules. IRR Soldiers must be afforded a nominal stipend that motivates their completion of the

required tasks online. By moving to a virtual muster, incentivized by a stipend, the Army will increase its capability to screen and train IRR Soldiers on a distributed basis.

The last two initiatives of the Army G-1's 2005 study are fully implemented. The initiatives at Figure 6 have been implemented through the Army requirement that all Soldiers leaving active duty meet with a Career Counselor at a Transition Center on their local installation.

Initiatives	Objectives
4. Expand Transition Campaign Efforts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recruit from the IRR to fill SELRES vacancies ▪ Enhance Capabilities of Career Counselors at Transition Centers to maximize AC-SELRES transitions ▪ Assist in monitoring unqualified personnel transfers to the IRR
5. Marketing & Outreach Campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a marketing campaign to recruit, educate and highlight service obligations and opportunities ▪ Develop IRR Outreach Program to keep Soldiers engaged

Figure 6. IRR Transformation Fourth & Fifth Initiatives⁴⁴

These career counselors, assigned directly to HRC, present information to Soldiers leaving their active status about opportunities within the SELRES and the Soldier's responsibilities as an IRR Soldier. HRC publishes an IRR handbook that is provided to all Soldiers through the Transition Centers.⁴⁵ This handbook gives critical information necessary to maintaining a qualifying retirement year, training opportunities, and required actions a Soldier must take regularly in the IRR.⁴⁶ The handbook is a critical method of communicating with Soldiers about the IRR and their continued requirements as a member of the Ready Reserve.

Marketing and outreach to IRR Soldiers is also performed by the Army Reserve Careers Division counselors and state Army National Guard (ARNG) recruiters who

have access to the personnel data of all Soldiers assigned to the IRR. This information is used by the Army Reserve and National Guard to engage with Soldiers after they have settled into their hometown following active duty. Soldiers typically have “buyer’s remorse” after making a major life change like leaving active service. These career counselors and recruiters provide IRR Soldiers with information about local SELRES opportunities and encourage Soldiers to checkout local units.

One more outreach program for IRR Soldiers is called the IRR Affiliation Program (IAP) and was developed by the U.S. Army Reserve (USAR) in direct partnership with HRC and the ARNG. This program fielded in 2011 provides IRR Soldiers and their families a local network of support in order to improve Soldier readiness and promote the Soldier for Life.⁴⁷ Of the 80,000 assigned to the IRR, almost 61,000 Soldiers have been affiliated with a local SELRES unit in either the USAR or the ARNG as of December 2012.⁴⁸ This initiative must be maintained as an information campaign only. Local SELRES unit commanders as well as IRR Soldiers must be aware of the campaign, but care must be taken not to further burden already taxed administrative personnel in local units. IRR Soldiers must feel comfortable contacting and engaging with local units, but understand that their primary support network comes from their assigned command, HRC. Local unit commanders should effectively use the IAP campaign to identify and communicate with IRR Soldiers in their community that may have the propensity to serve in the SELRES. Through local networking and relationship building, IRR Soldiers may be further motivated to service in an active status as part of the SELRES.

Recommendations

The Army G-1's 2005 study has laid the important ground work necessary to monitor and manage the IRR in this era of transformation and constrained resources. Its initiatives must be fully implemented in light of a reduced budget. The Army must focus on the first and third initiatives of the study in order to best keep the Army's strategic human resource asset viable for future use when called upon. Army G3 must provide HRC with stratification that identifies by grade and skill which categories of IRR Soldiers are most likely to be needed at various levels of contingency. This is necessary to prioritize limited resources for administration and training of the IRR. Reorganization of HRC into two consolidated offices, one in OPMD and one in EMPD, will give the command centralized capability and institutional focus by which best practices can be used to manage the IRR. Within these offices a basic monitoring of each Soldier's MSO is critical to ensuring IRR Soldiers remain motivated to serve by actively discharging those Soldiers who clearly no longer want to serve. HRC should be relieved of its physical muster requirement. HRC must be afforded the use of a virtual online screening capability through the use of CAC that will afford each IRR Soldier the opportunity to remain actively involved in their administrative and training management. Finally, continue to use the IAP as a campaign to provide awareness and connection of IRR Soldiers with local SELRES units, but do not burden local commanders with administrative requirements that must be performed centrally by HRC.

Conclusion

This essay has identified opportunities to increase the value, effectiveness and efficiency of the strategic human resource asset within the Individual Ready Reserve. It

began with a review of the value and strategic importance of the IRR to the total Army. This review was followed by an assessment of the IRR through the study commissioned by the Army G-1 in 2005 that recommended several initiatives. The essay included an analysis of the Army's IRR and its readiness based on musters performed by the HRC over the last five years. It identified pronounced gaps in the Army's ability to monitor, control and train the IRR due to ongoing and expected future resource constraints, and management practices. The essay then proposed several initiatives to enhance the readiness of the Army's IRR to ensure its capability to fill human resources requirements when called upon. By taking these steps to fully implement transformation of the IRR, Soldiers will find the cohesion and motivation to remain a "Soldier for Life" and respond to the nation's call when asked to serve once again in an active status.

Endnotes

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